

**TOWN OF VASS  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PUBLIC HEARING  
March 19, 2019**

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:00 by Parks Commissioner Rora Kellis. Commissioners in attendance were Callahan and Kosem. Leigh Baggs was also present.

The purpose of this public hearing was to outline details regarding the town's application for a PARTF grant.

Leigh Baggs outlined details pertaining to the grant application.

Ms. Baggs explained the PARTF Grant application process and documents. Her presentation covered the following areas:

- Reviewed the Comprehensive Master Plan.
- Scoring sheet and the maximum number of points the town could receive based on responses in each category.
- Total amount available for funding will not be available until applications are submitted throughout the state.
- Funds are from a dedicated source and could be rated by the General Assembly.
- Parks and Recreation Trust Authority reviews the applications. They are sent three sheets: Map, Justification for the project and cost estimates. The complete application will be available at their meeting if they want to review it further.
- The meeting will be held in the later part of the summer or early fall. At that time, they rank the projects.
- Leigh reviewed the Basic Facts and Assurances form and asked who the local government contact person for the grant would be. Mayor Callahan will be the local elected official to sign the document, and Mabel Walden will be the local contact person.
- Comprehensive Park Plan:
  - History of Vass, inventory of existing facilities; Sandy Ramey Keith Park amenities, parking and Veteran's Memorial.
  - Population and demographics of Vass is standard in the state.
  - New subdivisions will almost double the population. This increase will increase the need for park facilities to serve the neighborhoods and community.
  - Trends in recreation.
  - Future needs are to improve the playground, walking trails that connect the school to the park.
  - Three to five-year long-range plan.
  - Where are we now, and where do we want to be in the future.
  - Based on survey results, and comments made at the public hearing, the playground was the number one thing residents want to see improved. Commissioner Kellis stated in response to the survey and comments the town upgraded the park bathrooms and installed a camera system to prevent vandalism. The Police Department is able to pull up the cameras remotely and the restrooms can be cleaned easily.
  - The Board of Commissioners has set aside \$50,000 as a match to the grant funds requested.

Leigh Baggs stated playground equipment upgrades are the main focus. She explained the cost of shade structures and playground equipment typically buy starts at \$15,000 for basic structures. The commissioners need to decide where they want to place emphasis.

Beth Dent stated she grew up in Vass, had children here and now has grandchildren. She goes to the park as a volunteer for a Vass Lakeview youth group. Equipment is a factor as to why they don't use the park anymore. The equipment is rusted. There has been an explosion of new residents in Vass. Playground equipment is key. She would love to see Vass grow.

Discussion was held on the upgrades taking place in three or four stages. Mrs. Dent loves this idea and believes Vass has the opportunity to do something beautiful. People will move here because of the park. The board needs to put the vision out there. She said she is personally willing to go door to door to hand out literature, and that she feels the park is crucial.

Ms. Baggs asked Mrs. Dent where her volunteer group is taking the children now. Mrs. Dent stated they use the soccer field, play games under the pavilion and go to the Presbyterian Church. She and her husband take their grandchildren to Southern Pines or Carthage. There are no parks in Cameron.

All were in agreement that Sandy Ramey Keith Park needs new equipment, maintenance and upkeep.

Angela Vacek added people are visual and like to see stuff. She asked what the board has done put together about the equipment they have looked at and for an overall view of what the park will look like. She said they could ask businesses to donate. Leigh Baggs replied the best thing to do is to negotiate with playground equipment companies; and the best time to do that is after the grant is received. First the town has to meet all grant requirements and deadlines.

Leigh pointed out that when the grant is approved the Board of Commissioners and Mayor can appoint a committee to develop, plan and decide on equipment. The board can take the committees suggestions as a basis to design the park. Ms. Baggs said if the town appoints a committee, they can visit other parks and go through equipment catalogs.

Commissioner Kellis summarized the improvements the town has made over the last year and a half. Unfortunately, the PARTF Application for 2018 was not funded.

Leigh Baggs wanted to make sure everyone was aware that if the \$50,000 appropriated was spent before the grant is awarded, the grant could be rescinded.

Ms. Baggs commented the new survey that has been launched to find out what people want right now and so far, it seems they want equipment. Everything else will fall into a Five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

Ms. Vacek asked if this is a continuation of the process from last year and wanted to clarify the grant is for equipment. She said people did not want to come to the meeting because they came last time and thought the grant already went through. Leigh Baggs said this is a new application. The town has to go through process to update information and meet new requirements.

Commissioner Kosem asked if developers could donate to the park in lieu of other standard requirements. Commissioner Kellis stated he would like to see the town obtain the land between Vass Lakeview and the park. This land could be used for disc golf and walking trails.


More discussion was held on surveys and the PARTF Grand process. Commissioner Kellis said there are possibilities that go beyond playground equipment. Ms. Baggs said the best thing to do is to start small with he equipment.

Commissioner Kellis asked for motion to adjourn. Commissioner Kosem made the motion. Motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

TOWN OF VASS

  
Matthew Callahan, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:   
Mabel A. Walden, Town Clerk